

1473 8/35.000

THE  
P R E F A C E;

Being the Introduction to a Work shortly to be published

In F R A N C E,

Should Mr. Fox's Bill upon Libels be eluded, or wholly rejected,

In E N G L A N D.





THE  
P R E F A C E;

Being the Introduction to a Work shortly to be published

In FRANCE,

Should Mr. Fox's Bill upon Libels be eluded, or wholly rejected,

In ENGLAND.

Some general Observations on the corrupted Parts of an excellent  
Constitution will precede the Identification of each Abuse,  
in the Conduct, Character and Situation of In-  
dividuals;—shewing the People

HOW THINGS ARE.

Addressed to Messrs. LAMBTON, GREY, WHITBREAD, and  
SHERIDAN, Esquires,

BY PLAIN REASON.

---

Let the learn'd begin  
Th' enquiry, where disease could enter in;  
How those malignant atoms forc'd their way,  
What in the faultless frame they found to make their prey.  
DRYDEN.

---

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR J. RIDGEWAY, YORK-STREET, ST. JAMES'S;  
AND W. OWEN, OPPOSITE OLD BOND-STREET,  
PICCADILLY.

MDCCXCII.



Jan 4

## ADVERTISEMENT.

I AM well convinced that the following Preface, though scrupulously confined to general observations, will create some alarm, and give rise to much offence; but it will alarm those persons only whom I should be ashamed to flatter, and offend those alone whom I should blush to please. As a part of the community at large, and subject to its regulations, I feel myself justified in exhibiting such abuses as materially distress the whole, and to which I can adduce living instances in proof of every assertion. The title-page sufficiently explains my motive for withholding from the press in England, what I shall cheerfully commit to the unfettered vehicle of truth in France. The  
personal

228

vi      ADVERTISEMENT.

personal enmity which must naturally grow out of an exposure of private vice affecting public virtue, will afford me an opportunity to shew that, as I have never courted the smile of grandeur by a prostitution of sentiment, I shall have firmness enough to despise its frown. Wealth and ostentatious folly will never want assistance while there are knaves in power and sycophants in place. Ignorance, and inability to serve society, plumed by adventitious connection, or enriched by temporary means, will readily resort to where congenial weakness holds out permanent dissipation, and luxury is supplied by unexhausted fortune. These, like the drones of a bee-hive, will buzz about in murmurs of spite and defamation; and, without answering argument, rest the whole of their resentment (in impotence of refutation) upon personal invective.

## ADVERTISEMENT. vii

tive.—To such I shall oppose the following passage from Horace :

———Liberius si

Dixero quid, si forte jocosus, hoc mihi juris  
 Cum veniâ dabis. Infuevit pater optimus hoc me,  
 Ut fugerem exemplis vitiorum quæque notando.  
 Cum me hortaretur, parcè, frugaliter atque  
 Viverem uti contentus eo quod mi ipse parasset :  
 Nonne vides *Albi* ut malè vivat filius ? utque  
*Barrus* inops ? magnum documentum ne patriam rem  
 Perdere quis velit. A turpi meretricis amore  
 Cum deterreret : *Sectani* dissimilis sis,  
 Ne sequerer mœchas, concessâ cum venere uti  
 Possem : deprensi non bella est fama *Treboni*  
 Aiebat.  
 Formabat puerum dictis : et sive jubebat  
 Ut facerem quid ; habes auctorem quo facias hoc ;  
 Unum ex judicibus selectis objiciebat :  
 Sive vetabat ; an hoc inhonestum et inutile factu,  
 Necne sit, addubites, flagret rumore malo cum  
 Hic atque ille ? avidos vicinum funus ut ægros  
 Exanimat, mortisque metu sibi parcere cogit :  
 Sic teneros animos aliena opprobria sæpe  
 Absterrent vitiis.



E R R A T A.

Page 3, line 22, *for bears, read bares.*  
Page 14, line 2, *for stands, read stand.*  
Page 42, line 6, *for his, read their.*

---

---

Titles, instead of exalting, debase those who act not up to them.

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

There are some people fated to be fools; they not only commit follies by choice, but are constrained to do so by fortune.

ID.

My name's Macbeth. —

The Devil himself could not pronounce a title  
More hateful to mine ear —

SHAKESPEARE.

**I**F the intelligent reader, when he shall have perused the subject of the following work, uninfluenced by party, and unwarped by fashion, will condescend to weigh in the scale of comparative discernment, the above mottos, he will perceive their drift and meaning; whilst the principal figure in the piece may, perhaps, in his liveliest hour of splendid intoxication, be forced to feel that, however cheap in *his* estimation,

B

writers

writers and literary characters may seem, there are who can render an insult upon their accidental inferiority, severely dear to insolent depravity. The mind, though long depressed by custom, and fettered by corruption, is so far superior to the body, that in every change of government, and in every vicissitude of fortune, the one has the certain consolation to feel that nothing can disgrace integrity, whilst the other is hourly shaken by the change of party, or the whim of power. In the present period of advanced experience—and theory in its widest range has never reached what France has wakened into action—the chiefs and leaders in community are forcibly taught the instability of state-finesse, when facts are pressed upon delusion, and trick is baffled by exposure. We are, in this island—though still as much behind our neighbours in reform, as they have been too forward in correction—fast advancing towards that

happy state of constitution and government, when neither wealth nor situation shall screen corruption ; nor law, the intended guardian of the aggregate, be made the partial refuge of a few—when discussion shall be as free in parliament as the first principle of election intended it should, and when a fair and just inquiry into the illicit conduct of a member or treasury-dependant shall not be quashed by prepared majorities, nor candour and justice converted into crimes by the tortured-sense-of-the laws, or the convenient interpretation of the judges—when the unavoidable frailties of humanity, dragged into public scorn for purposes of malice ; when domestic wounds, and family contentions, neither affecting public fame, nor injuring public utility, shall be the only objects of public correction ; when fact to corroborate assertion for the investigation of abuses, shall not be deemed a libel, because it bears to the world at large the foul

asssemblage of ministerial traffic, the sale of honours, and the gift of pensions, to raise a parapet before corruption, and to lull the vain and idle with the produce of the sweat of industry; when the \* patriot shall not tamely sit with a quashed inquiry trusted to oblivion, through the shame and terror of impeachment hung before the eye of conscience by a sense of retaliation; when an honest wish to redress the injury, and to do a public service, shall be stronger than the blush that burns upon the forehead of conviction, or the dictate of convenience; when, in a word, society shall be linked together by a chain of gradual concord, from the head of the constitution to the lowest

\* A late enquiry into the conduct of Mr. R— proves the necessity of truth and consistency in all parties; and the lavish compliments paid to the M— by determined opposition, puts us in mind of the vulgar expression; *Tickle my back, and I will tickle your belly*!—*Risum teneatis, amici!*



member of community; when nobility shall deserve distinction, because it will not stoop to baseness; and the commonalty of the land be rendered happy, because it cannot be oppressed. Event, the child of Time, and promise of Experience, will probably soon disclose to this country a general system of reformation without general tumult, and a wise correction of abuses without struggle and confusion.

At present—and I am sorry to assert that no country exhibits more glaring instances than Great Britain—ministers appear inadequate to the mysterious purposes of office, unless they are screened from investigation, by the passive instruments of their own creation, or the duped confidence of nominal authority. The situation they fill, if honestly supplied with the necessary means of salutary order and regulation, if adorned by worth, and marked out by wisdom, is intrinsically good, and fitted to society. The

perversion of the first principles produces those evils which government was meant to oppose, and the institution of power and legislation established to prevent. The people at large are far from exhibiting that stubborn spirit of resistance, which has partially deformed our history, so long as their rights are guarded by the power they themselves create.

In the multitude there is much faith—Confidence is the growth of minds willing to obey, as long as obedience does not make them wretched, and ready to support the guardians of their tranquillity, as long as exertion is not baffled by deceit. But if the commonalty of countries in general, and the inhabitants of Great Britain in particular, subscribe to the public weal with the eagerness of strong belief, and all the alacrity of mutual service done to king and subject, their opposition to the throne  
they

they raised is as violent and unabating, as their faith was calm amidst taxation, and their willingness to relieve the nation's necessities, honest and productive. Ministry is a term little understood by the aggregate of the people. They hear it once, perhaps, in seven years, in the noise and tumult of election; and they read it, without caring to define its meaning, either as a word of course, or mystical spell in the diurnal squibs of parties. The inquisitive are satisfied with the trite answers of a few; and if they should discover abuse, are easily lulled by the whispers of cabal: when the administration of a country finds it necessary to adopt delusion, the phantom is nursed by secrecy, and kept alive by trick. Its existence hangs upon the convenient purposes of a cabinet, reduced by unsuccessful wars abroad, and unexampled dissipation of public property at home, to feed upon the very vitals of industry, without securing to the

wasted subject an eventual benefit. When corruption has reached to this excess, the last resort is the sale and purchase of such objects as may cheat the weak, and keep from the efficient the nakedness they are bought to cover.—Nor can the farce succeed without thrusting from the scene the honest tender of unshaken ability—worth and talents, which are generally accompanied by obstinate truth and perseverance, will not readily join, or be subservient to, deception. It is more dangerous to have men of this description within the gates of the treasury, than to be exposed to the possible inconsistency of time-serving fools without. In the first there is stubborn integrity; in the second pliable duplicity—that is the patriot of principle, this the courtier of interest and caprice. The blunders of the last seldom endanger the idol they set up, as the distribution of public property is widened or contracted according to the demands of  
private

private friendship, or the calls of general intrigue. To juggle the multitude into a species of torpid inactivity, is the adopted creed of almost every statesman; and in some instances—but these are rare—the policy is sanctioned by necessity. Objects are judiciously selected out of all ranks and descriptions, who, from wealth, character, or connection, will promote the views of ministry, neither questioning nor being questioned on the propriety of its measures. But it is principally from the first and third denomination (for character, containing principle and integrity, without the least alloy of falsehood and dissimulation, is a mere negative in government) that modern statesmen pick the means of influence and controul. By drawing to themselves the produce of industry, or the inheritance of foolish ostentation, they are enabled to answer the secret purposes of office,



office, without too daringly breaking down the obstacles of a free constitution, or openly violating the rights they should protect. The funds are ingeniously reduced, or raised, according to the barometer of state-convenience ; and without effectually removing them, a temporary stop is put to mischiefs that must eventually return with all the pernicious consequences of delay. So long as the minister can lead into the hands of the merchant, he will return the trick, and, to use a trite expression, they will conjointly play the whole game. But, to carry on the figure, when, by an artful shuffle, all the winning cards are distributed on one side only, what chance is there left for the other ? Skill and perseverance may struggle and dispute the victory for a time ; but when the shew of honours, the constant property of their adversaries, is invariably exhibited against just and honourable play,

the

the exertions of ability must necessarily fail.

In every commercial country, the encouragement of industry and speculation is not only a wise, but an indispensable maxim. It is the spring of action, the result of which is permanent advantage ; and although distinction of rank be requisite to community, the necessity goes no farther than to keep together the several links of regular union between first and last. What we call nobility in this country, if accurately considered, is a mixed assemblage of the descendants of families succeeding one another in hereditary right upon the ground of ancestry, and of individuals becoming noble by purchase, or parliamentary interest. Nor does the introduction of new names affect the intrinsic grandeur of what is termed primitive distinction. An individual, in whom the memory of  
some

some great and glorious action is revived, and pictured to posterity, is naturally looked up to by the descendants of that community which the worth, courage, and information of his ancestor had served and protected. A sort of natural respect attaches itself to the recollection of merit, however remote the object of admiration; and mankind in general, rather than be ungrateful, are lavish of their praise and confidence to those whom the brilliancy of family exploits, and the wisdom of their forefathers, *should* excite to virtue. But when, with the record of antiquity before him, the source and origin of all his greatness, the representative of a great and glorious character is marked by imbecility and meanness only, the contrast creates contempt, and all the outward appendages of rank turn their owner into mockery and shame. To the degeneracy of such  
men

men may be attributed the increasing influence of levelling philosophy. The degraded state of the first order, which the depravity of its members has spread before the lowest by a dishonourable intercourse of familiar vice and dissipation with the most ignorant and most debased, has let in doctrines of innovating theory, which, if prudently followed, may correct, but, inconsiderately pursued, must destroy dominion ; and the most determined republican, or, to use the expression of the day, the most violent democrat, will not attempt to argue upon the possibility of an equal participation of power between the governors and the governed.—This would be as great a solecism in politics, as it is a contradiction in terms.

Civilization first produced community,  
and community could not exist without  
rank

rank and subordination. If agriculture, the ground-work of national prosperity, stands in need of the unremitted labours of the rude and the unlettered, the produce of their industry demands the utmost vigilance of wisdom and discernment. What the body does in the former, the mind completes in the latter. And it seems admirably ordained by Providence, that if the uneducated mass of civilized society be confined within the limits of little more than animal conception, that is almost wholly engrossed in the cultivation of nature, and scarcely actuated by any thing beyond the sense of want, their exclusion from the scenes of gilded life, in depriving them of rank and honours, keeps off the cares of knowledge and refinement. Not that this exclusion is a settled principle in nature, to which the lowest member of society is unalterably fixed, and from which it is impossible



possible for a man of genius and strong intellect to depart, without breaking that salutary continuity of order which constitutes just government and safe subjection. On the contrary, we have now before us many instances of elevation, in all the honourable professions, and in the first line of mercantile connection. \* There are men in this island, and in the sister kingdom, who, by force of talents, persevering industry, and great good sense, have been ennobled, because they had abilities to guide the helm of a vessel shattered by the loss she had sustained from her foes abroad, and exposed to more by the neglect of her pretended friends at home. How those abilities have been exerted, and in what manner the faith of a whole nation has been answered, the murmurs of the land at large, the thralldom of the chief guardian of liberty, the *Press*, the

\* Lord Thurlow, Hawkesbury, &c.

bargain

bargain and sale of titles and of places, will best discover ; while the unaccountable introduction of naturalized aliens, with nothing but mere wealth, the fruits of mysterious speculation, perhaps the produce of colluding villany, will powerfully prove, whether truth and honesty return the contributions of a generous nation, by an impartial display of merit in the gift of title, and a fair appropriation of property in the discharge of unavoidable obligations.— They will prove (for the farce is almost over) the flimsy texture of the web that interest and private policy have woven ; and, as they convince mankind, teach ministers to feel a necessity for reform. Men, who have been lifted into power for the accommodation of courts or factions, will no longer be able to co-operate with them at the expence of their fellow-subjects ; nor to set their faces against a dissolution  
of

of arbitrary institutions, when the freedom of individuals calls aloud for their repeal. No man, however jealous of the splendour of another's situation, or disgusted with the obscurity of his own, will cast ignominy upon an object of the most recent exaltation, from the mere contingency of birth\*. The present Chancellor of Great Britain is perhaps one of the brightest examples that history can produce of talents forced through all the obstacles of life, 'by a determined persevering temper, into the most sacred place of responsibility. Amidst the wreck of parties he appears the center-point of universal concurrence. When abilities, hitherto not known to have been prostituted to the power that called them

\* Some time back a very invidious paragraph appeared in a morning print, respecting the birth, &c. of Lord Thurlow. Such abuse, instead of strengthening, only serves to invalidate assertion.

into action, and blunt assertion *as yet* believed the dictate of bold integrity, are sanctioned, in the discharge of duty, by inflexible truth and conviction only, the partial confidence they obtain becomes a general blessing. In the question of libels, a long uninterrupted system of uniform adherence to certain principles is put to the test. The public will soon be convinced whether the impulse of justice is to triumph over the whisper of convenience, or the freedom of opinion, and an honest exposition of facts be fettered by the fears and conscious follies of a few.

——If weakness may excuse,  
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,  
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?  
All wickedness is weakness.

MILTON.

Virtue does not dread exposure; but if  
vice may sit secure, unawed and uncontroul-  
ed,

ed, because the law protects her ; if the production of proof to substantiate infamy and guilt, be rendered amenable to a tribunal where the accused are shielded by their judges, and truth constitutes the crime ; to what quarter shall investigation refer assertion, or how shall abuses be corrected, when the facts to shew them are stifled by coercion ? Mystery in the internal government of a country must ever be pernicious. When suspicion, roused by the increasing spirit of enquiry, has once taken possession of the public mind, the secrecy\* of kings, courts, and ministers, becomes an object of alarm ; and, if not speedily removed, must eventually create general discontent. The management of public matters ; the eco-

\* The secrecy of the cabinet in time of war is sound policy ; in time of peace it is almost invariably the source of interest and oppression.



nomy of the state, as far as it relates to the  
 subject ; the imposition of taxes, their  
 causes and effects ; the increase (for the  
 idea of a diminution appears too visionary  
 to mention) of the civil list ; the applica-  
 tion of certain sums, not expended, though  
 speciously included under the head of secret  
 service money ; the continuation of pen-  
 sions, originally granted for the life only  
 of disabled merit ; the approximation of  
 rich imbecility and gorgeous folly to the  
 source of honour and distinction, to main-  
 tain the influence of unequal representa-  
 tion, or to gratify private ambition ; the  
 enormous size to which the bulk of eccle-  
 siastical preferment is grown, and the op-  
 pressed state of the laborious, on which  
 these meek and humble descendants of the  
 apostles fatten in ease and affluence ; the  
 wretchedness of the really useful curates,  
 or,

or, to speak proverbially, of the journey-men of the church; the prostitution of patronage to the visible destruction of that spirit and perseverance which formerly made England's navy the pride of every British subject, and the dread of every foreign enemy; the supineness of the army; the partial distinction of a few, to the manifest disgust of the many\*; the inefficiency of the militia, in its present state; the immorality it breathes into the peasantry, without answering the intent of its establishment; but above all, the aggrandizement of creatures whose abilities can neither do credit to their creators, nor be of service to the country on whose industry

\* An opportunity now presents itself to rectify this glaring abuse; and it is sincerely hoped that as the Prussian system of exercise, the real standard of arms, is adopted, all invidious distinctions will be cheerfully sacrificed.

they feed; \* these are matters the meanest subject has a right to investigate, and the most despotic minister should not withhold: these are matters of a public nature, and cannot long be screened from public knowledge: these are matters into which abuses will always steal, be the constitution of the country ever so perfect, or the government ever so adequate. But when the evil is felt by the people, and its cause only known to those who, having the power, have not the virtue to apply a remedy, concealment aggravates oppression, and the most salutary systems for the regulation of community become abortive. A tree that is congenial to the soil in which it has been planted, will increase, and answer the fondest expectations of the farmer,

\* Yet these are facts, against a fair investigation of which the law of libels holds out the severest penalty.

so

so long as the nature of its growth is warily watched, and shielded by attention. But if a swarm of locusts are suffered to infect the branches, the trunk will gradually decay, the root cease to supply the sap that fed it, and a dry, withered, stunted remnant of unfruitful wood hang crumbling over the earth. The government of this country, like the oak that long has been her best defence, was once productive of every blessing that human faculty could reap from salutary power—it branched out from the happy effects at home, into the widest prosperity abroad. How those happy effects have dwindled into evils, by the introduction of interested objects, and that prosperity been curtailed by national dishonour, history will hereafter shew, though recent memory presents what truth must stifle or disguise.

I have heard it asserted, that corruption must unavoidably follow whenever the accumulation of private wealth is an avenue to public distinction, and the different posts of trust are occupied by men for the conveniency of the power that raised them. Schemes of immense expenditure are embraced, to throw contracts into the hands of such people as will support the measures of administration ; and when riches cease to be the first object of ambition with the possessors of great interest and overgrown property, policy satisfies their vanity by conferring nobility, and the nation is insensibly governed by the practice of one man, who has had art enough to speculate in the pride and \* weakness of individuals, and to turn to one quarter

\* No man in his senses will believe that Mr. Pitt is a sincere advocate for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

He



quarter all the channels of confidence and authority. Whenever this happens, the system of government is altered by innovation ; the happy mixture of its constitution is divided into unequal portions, and the weaker parts gradually lose their spring of action. The three estates, so admirably adapted to the situation of Great Britain, and to the temper of the people, insensibly cease to co-operate from a monopoly of grandeur and interest in the first order, which leave to the lower nothing but the galling sense of visible subjection. As in the wonderful mechanism of a clock, the action is kept up by the strictest principles of concord between the lesser and the greater springs, and the whole is instantly deranged by the most trifling im-

He is too much a statesman to wish it, but too good a politician to hazard one inch of parliamentary ground from the want of *gradual* concurrence, and specious approbation.

pediment

pediment in the least component part ; so in a mixed government there is one general co-operating spirit of communication, which renders dominion and subjection equally important in the effect, though apparently unequal in the cause.

The splendour of situation only differs from the crowd it dazzles by an assumption of state and grandeur which necessity first devised, and policy has since confirmed. But the object it adorns is intrinsically no more than the meanest of the land, whom accident or adversity has placed within the narrowest limits of obedience. Their sole difference is in the virtuous exertion of talents which nature has bestowed, cultivation matured, and opportunity displayed. Nor is the magnificence of the man in power to be envied. If he be more conspicuous than the rest of his fellow-subjects, and be honoured

rounded with a nearer approach to the throne—the first gilded link of a necessary series—he is less master of his own natural propensities to ease and pleasure, from being less at liberty to indulge them. In fact, a minister, to be truly valuable, must be almost divested of passions\*. The friendships of his youth must be governed by the duties of his situation, and public advantage supersede private affection. Where abilities unite with personal inter-

\* In this instance, our immaculate financier appears pre-eminent. But if he be not subject to the finer passions, there is much reason to believe he sometimes yields to the grosser. Kings, courts, and governments, have been rendered subservient to Venus from the earliest record of civilized society. The ministers of kings, at this hour, if the tale of Britain can be credited, are equally influenced by Bacchus—Good-fellowship, in the hour of conviviality, will parcel out the property of a whole nation, to satisfy the cordial wishes of a few bon-vivans—*Credite posteri!*

course,

course, the country is benefited by the promotion of a fellow-student, a rich acquaintance, or a poor relation; but when nothing but the increase of parliamentary influence, or the remembrance of school-day familiarity, are motives for extended patronage, the property of the land is turned from the stream of general utility into the secret channels of corruption. Secure in a majority, the minister faces with intrepidity every question of the commons; venality sits plumed in the feathers of ministerial insolence, and as it suits the purpose of its maker, dependance brings forward, or keeps back discussion \*.

\* A very recent motion for an enquiry into the conduct of a treasury-agent, during the Westminster election, will fully elucidate this observation.—How complete must have been the triumph of investigation, had not the dread of retaliation taught policy to pocket what liberty must blush to own!—*Aliquando dormitat Homerus!*

To

To return to my original position, respecting rank and subordination, I am decidedly of opinion that, with all its infirmities, nobility is indispensably requisite to good community; but that nobility should be select; not placed within the reach of every fool and favourite of fortune, or at the disposal of every venal administration, within the smile of concubines, or in the gift of knaves; not raised beyond the level of humanity to disgrace and wound it by dishonourable practices; not vested with the appendages of title, to make rank ridiculous, and wealth oppressive, or lifted into public notice, to become the object of public derision; not gartered by kings to be led about by ministers; or engrafted upon native right to gratify the ostentation and the pride of aliens; not trusted with the dearest interests of the people, and the distribution of laws, to be shielded from illicit acts;



acts; or, under the sanction of privilege, be seen at large with a load of uncanceled debts, to crush the industry of individuals\*. It is enough for a bold and generous nation, to be passive from principles of national unanimity, under a visible diminution of national grandeur, to submit to every edict of the cabinet with scarcely the sanction of their representatives, and to feed oppression because they will not hastily renounce allegiance: but it is too much tamely to subscribe to measures which must eventually establish monopoly within the narrow circle of controul. When the prudent

\* A sarcastic Frenchman, speaking of the frequency of arrests in England, observed that the rigour of the law was nicely varnished over by the privileges of the law-makers.

When rank is in the gift of ministers, and pensions are the reward of partial service, we must expect weakness in the first, and the most venal subservience in the latter.

limits

limits of circumscribed society, in their extension towards the seat of rational authority, cease to be gradual, the great object of government is materially injured by inequality; the importance which every circle should internally possess, the little consequence it should afford to the lowest subject, and his consequent independance, are broken into for the partial purposes of state, without contributing to the public weal.

The industry of this country, the persevering spirit of its inhabitants, and the high perfection of our arts and manufactures, do not stand in need of political trick and speculation. The same spirit which enabled our forefathers to settle the constitution and to arrange its government, is still amongst us. With a generosity of disposition, even in his most trifling contributions,

tributions, the *real* Englishman has a manliness about him, which will restrain the immediate impulse of bravery; but when roused, will not easily submit to temporising power. The resources, which the land possesses, and the increasing means that industry supplies, he knows to be sufficient for the honest calls of administration; and however backward the state of its finances may appear from an exorbitant debt (the liquidation of which, like the cup and ball of a juggler, is the eternal vehicle of mysterious policy), the influx of wealth, through the medium of unrivalled commerce, he is fully convinced would preserve the national character, if the produce of its taxes were properly applied. The happy mixture of \* king, lords, and commons opens

\* *Selden* says, "A king is a thing men have made for their own sakes, for quietness sake."—If confined with-

opens every avenue, that aspiring speculation, and indefatigable industry can wish, for the accumulation of private capital, and the consequent relief of public exigency. But this wise and salutary union of the executive and legislative powers, producing strength and safety to the people on the ground of equal representation, was never meant, in its original formation, to be susceptible of party-feuds and personal disputes. A fixed and settled system of opposition (however useful, in contingency, the spirit may have been to the body compact) is neither the natural result, nor the intended effect of its political existence. To expect that the whole senate of a nation should, individually considered, be exempt from the natural frailties of humanity, or that because the

in the principles of the constitution, a king of England cannot hurt it, let his incapacity to govern be ever so glaring.

D

con-

constitution of England approaches nearer to perfection than any other, the administration of the civil power, and the co-operating members of government, should not be liable to errors, would be as ridiculous in theory, as an almost total perversion of its principles is detrimental in practice. Whatever occasions dissatisfaction, or creates suspicion, in the *unequally* represented part of community—and the hour is not far distant when the whole must be equally so—is a direct deviation from the original contract. Privilege, too much, I fear, the refuge of dishonesty, was never meant to protect lawless indigence, or to screen insolent imbecility. The man, selected by his fellow-subjects to protect their rights and to be the guardian of their interests, was supposed incapable of acts, that must not only incapacitate him for the duties of his situation by private embarrassments, but expose him



to the more dangerous temptation of courts, held out by ministers for the sacrifice of truth and freedom. When this happens, the sacred receptacle of wisdom and integrity becomes a species of foundling hospital for the offspring of dissipation\*; a retreat for wasted luxury, and a maintenance for titled folly and dependance. Hence the rise and growth of boroughs, and the unavoidable prostitution of the dearest privilege that a subject can possess; hence the attachment of spiritual concerns to temporal emolument; the gift of livings, and the source of ecclesiastical corruption for the convenience of men, whom accident has enriched, and venality supported. But these are not the inherent defects of an English constitution and government; they

\* The law of arrest against the common subject of the land is as infamous and oppressive, as the exemption from it in the privilege of peers and members is partial and unjust.

are the encroachments of time, widened by neglect, and borne by indolence. They are the exuberances of great private wealth, the effects of public splendour lulled into an apathy to the dictates of experience, by the adversity of a rival, and the temporary advantages of unmolested speculation. But when time shall have erected upon the ruins of despotism, the solid structure of reformed administration; when freedom of enquiry shall have coalesced with necessary authority, and the exertions of parts be answered by a happy concord of the whole, event will disclose to Great Britain, in the superiority of France, what at present speculative art and sophistry disguise. Universal philanthropy may be the theme, and general peace the visionary hope of a set of men who look into futurity, after having stripped mortality of all its passions and propensities; through the deluding optic of philosophy. But these *enlightened* writers should

should recollect, that before the principles they wish to establish can be made to operate, it will be necessary to reduce nature into rule, partial interest into unbounded benevolence, and all the irregularities of manhood into conformity of thought and feeling; and when this grand object shall have been effected, the earth must be portioned out, according to the increase or decrease of population in every country; the produce must correspond with the wants of the cultivators, and one general accordant spirit pervade the peaceful level of creation; the journeyman manufacturer, the miner, the soldier, and the seaman, must possess a certain share, without the hazard of acquisition, or the sacrifice of health; luxury must sink to mere subsistence; age be without its wants, and youth without its passions. There will be no occasion for government over the aggregate, because

every individual will be just and satisfied within. The sea will be left to its own tumult and tempests, because commerce will not stand in need of navigation, nor the common necessities of life be thought inadequate to the enjoyment of it, without the addition of gold and diamonds: the horse will be left to his native field and forest, the bird to the unaffrighted air, and every species of living animal remain untouched and unmolested, because the vegetable growth of nature will be found sufficiently nutritive without the mixture of blood; children from the breast will wander into a total oblivion of the milk they sucked, language become gradually useless, and reason itself be distinguished from instinct by little more than a consciousness within which points to an Hereafter; society, in a word, will be broken into as many parts as there will be individuals in creation; community be a general  
 assemblage

assemblage of man and beast, as accident  
 may draw them together ; and civilization  
 return to a state of undistinguished nature,  
 with nothing to trespass upon uncultivated  
 intellect but the visible dissolution of matter:  
 primogeniture will not require the subtlety  
 of statesmen, nor the exactions of govern-  
 ment, to force unequal possessions into the  
 channels of equal participation ; nor birth  
 be a mark of eminence where all must be  
 alike. This is the plain unvarnished mean-  
 ing, the tendency, without the possibility  
 of effect, of our modern innovators. The  
 government they wish to found cannot ex-  
 ist, without a total annihilation of union—a  
 system of multiplied institutions under plau-  
 sible denominations, brought into one term,  
 but subject to all the vicissitudes of interest,  
 prejudice and passion—a government that is  
 to enrich industry without consumption,  
 give grandeur without ambition, and con-



sequence without authority ; which is to employ mankind without distinction, drive luxury into its original source, the bowels of the earth, and the unfathomed caverns of the ocean ; and, by making every individual the lord and master of his wishes, prove education fruitless, wisdom delusive, and all the records of antiquity the falsehoods of tradition. I cannot, on this occasion, deny myself the satisfaction of quoting some remarkable lines from Voltaire, whose writings have not a little contributed, jointly with Rousseau, to the present systems of revolution.

Oui ! je suis loin de m'en dedire :  
 Le luxe a des charmes puissans ;  
 Il encourage les grands talens,  
 Il fait la gloire d'un empire.  
 Il ressemble aux vins delicats,  
 Il faut s'en permettre l'usage :  
 Le plaisir sied très-bien au sage :  
 Buvez ; ne vous enivrez pas.

This quotation irrefragably proves what Voltaire—a keen and sensible observer of human nature—undoubtedly believed. He saw the necessity of a first order in the distribution of wealth through the channels of luxury and magnificence, and the natural return which was made to the laborious by the consumption of the opulent. Thousands that must have wandered to the desert in useless barbarity, were attached to community by continual occupation, and remained contented with the earnings of toil and ingenuity, although they were less conspicuous than the men they served and decorated\*. To the latter, Voltaire wisely exclaims,

Buvez ; ne vous enivrez pas.

“ Be in the full and undisputed possession of

\* Rousseau observes—Il n’y a au monde que deux manières de s’élever, ou par sa propre industrie, ou par l’imbécillité des autres.

every

every comfort that rank and riches can afford—but let not the intoxication of power, the glare of title, or the charms of gold, fix insolence to fortune, and tyranny to situation: learn, in feeling the use from the produce of his labour, to respect the peasant and mechanic—to preserve dignity without pride, and grandeur without oppression.” There was a time when France might have availed herself of a wise and salutary caution, and the government have been reformed without the blood of individuals, the expulsion of her princes, and all the calamities of harsh correction. This, perhaps, is the hour which Great-Britain should employ to rectify confessed abuses, and snatch from the lifted hand of murmuring subjection the ready torch of discord and confusion. The constitution, in spite of every thing that has hitherto been advanced by writers of opposite sentiments, and, I fear, of more opposite interests,

interests, is, in itself, susceptible of amendment ; nor can it be said with Mr. Burke, that alteration of parts must inevitably hurt the whole. When an edifice which visibly stands in need of repair must be left to moulder and decay, because it would be dangerous to touch the walls, or visit their foundations, the original principle of building must have been defective ; and the sooner it is corrected by a removal of the whole, the more probable will be the means to substitute a better. But this is not the intrinsic state of the constitution and government of this country. Its principles are perverted ; and, with the introduction of foolish ostentation and stubborn imbecility, abuses are engrafted upon the most productive branches of the tree, to spread a noxious shade over the natural splendour of the land. M——rs, whose duty it is to lop the luxuriance of time, and preserve the useful in-

crease

crease of industry, curtail the one by multiplied taxation, and extend the other by prostituted patronage. Instead of the free and open countenance of conscious integrity, we see the double face of Janus—with Justice and Truth apparently smiling on one side, and Falsehood and stern Oppression couching on the other.

This assertion, which grows out of the most steady and confirmed belief in the excellency of the government of England, and from a full conviction that it is only disgraced by the selfishness of individuals, not intrinsically defective, will keep me a little longer on the general principles of regulated society. In the discussion of them, I shall endeavour to steer between the hackneyed doctrines of law and precedent (easily tortured into every proof that interest may want or sophistry devise), and the meanness of reflections upon  
on



on the individual characters of writers to divert the reader from real argument. For specific proofs to such abuses as I shall point out in the gross, before I conclude this preface, I must request the indulgence of the candid till a speedy emancipation of the Press in England will afford the means to substantiate assertion by glaring facts without the fear of oppression, or the exposition of them will find its way from the corrected scene of monarchy in France.

Theory, too often bewildered by the magic light of *Utopian* promise, may argue upon systems of government from abstract principles, but never can so far delude the sensible part of mankind as to establish forms which practice will not answer. Hitherto the world appears to have been in infancy; and, if we may credit the publications of the day, we are, on this side the Atlantic at least,

least, merely approaching to common sense and reason : on the other side, man, suddenly emerging from darkness and oppression, is in the full maturity of intellect, and in the complete possession of every comfort, without the fastidiousness of rank, or the galling sense of inferiority. Nevertheless, if we compare the more extraordinary revolution of France, in its immediate effects, with the changes that have happened in other governments, the perplexed state of her finances, the voluntary exile of her princes, and the summary sequestration of their property, the perpetual discord of her leaders—whatever denomination they may assume—the ruin of her manufactures, and the total overthrow of empire ; we shall find, that by drawing the lower order too close to the upper, the safe and useful system of gradation has been destroyed, and a species of general anarchy produced.

Without

Without seriously weighing the fatal consequences of an entire annihilation of rank and title, the conductors of these strange and wonderful events have removed what has ever been found indispensably necessary to good community, instead of correcting the evils which time and luxury had given birth to. They have pulled down the edifice to which depravity had gained access, without consulting the good or bad effects of innovation, or wisely substituting some sort of barrier against the irruptions of an ungovernable multitude : in a word, they have destroyed the system they only wished to correct, because the corrupted members of it had perverted its principles : yet some writers, by no means contemptible in the annals of literature, nor unacquainted with politics, have vindicated principles in the gross, which never could exist in detail. Forms have been suggested which experience

ence cannot function, and a regular line of communication attempted to be drawn round society, which every vicissitude of fortune might interrupt.

To the real politician conviction will readily point out the futility of argument into which the theoretical reasoners upon modern government are betrayed, by not distinguishing between the abuses which have crept into political contracts originally good, and between the remedies which might be applied to parts without endangering the whole. When an individual undertakes the arduous task of giving a species of geographical chart, with all its minute boundaries and divisions, for the direction of his fellow-creatures, he should be aware that passions are not easily guided, nor private interests marked out by the compass of general utility; nor can the example of America,

rica, however speciously effective the operations of Congress may *now* appear, be brought forward against the universal system of European governments. The present state of that country resembles more the situation of a ship under jury-masts, which, after having been disabled in action, or distressed by weather, makes for the nearest haven, than the condition of a settled fabric, formed to resist the force of elements, and, by experience, proved to be effectual.

The natural consequence of unremitted exertion is propensity to ease ; and we almost invariably find, that the love of tranquillity is in proportion to the hardships we have endured for the acquisition of it—novelty, besides, is ever productive of temporary satisfaction ; and the same temper which made us submit to all the calamities of war, the same necessity which forced us

E

to



to sacrifice the soft endearments of life to the noise and tumult of contention, teach us to wait patiently till time and opportunity can repair the damages we have sustained. This is a general effect of nature; and I do not suppose that, with the expulsion of the British arms, her influence has been driven out of America.

I am now imperceptibly led, by cursory observations, to glance at the peculiar situation of General Washington. A writer\*, no less remarkable for the talents he derives from nature only, than for the novelty of his political talents and declarations, asserts, "that no man in his sober senses will compare the character of any of the kings of Europe, with that of General Washington."

Before a comparison of the sort could be attempted, it would be necessary to find out

\* Mr. Thomas Pain.

another

another country emancipated, as America is, and settling itself by the most calm and gentle means, after having sustained the severest shocks that war and civil discord could produce. Economy becomes natural where extravagance would increase the hardships of necessity, without answering any solid purpose of public or private wishes; and the same confidence which entrusted life, liberty and fortune to the management of an individual during the storm, readily subscribes to the counsels of a man, who, when he has saved the vessel, wishes to repair the wreck. Embarking as a private citizen in a general warfare, Mr. Washington was actuated by no other impulse, but that of a good and generous heart roused into action by principles of truth and justice. With opportunities to shew the hero, he remained satisfied in steadily adhering to the wise system of defence, uninfluenced by

the opening prospects of success, the misfortunes of his adversaries, or the intrepidity of his followers. To every requisite that forms the general, he added the more certain conduct of the statesman; and prudently uniting both, his exertions finally accomplished what neither the threats of a British senate could retard, nor the finest army that ever crossed the Atlantic could prevent. Had the ambition of the soldier overcome the calm forbearance of the citizen, America might probably, at this moment, have been subject to the will and pleasure of a master, without the obnoxious title of a king. But who will promise a continuation of unanimity which out of the most recent danger, out of the bleeding remains of slaughtered parents, friends, relatives, and fellow-citizens, is grown into a generous disinterested wish to make public good the leading principle and passion?

Who,

Who, after the decease of Washington, will insure to the country at large, a centre-point to which the respect and gratitude of a whole nation will direct their feelings, and from which neither prejudice, interest, nor ambition will flow? While, like the elements, passions are attached to human nature, their influence must be various. In the calm of general tranquillity, each impulse of the private citizen, that is not roused by public sentiment, lies dormant for a time. From the waste of general property, one wide pervading spirit is awakened into action, and general recuperation becomes the sole object of individuals. But who will attempt to lay down rules and principles of conduct to the succeeding generation; or to shut out the eternal recurrence of opposite wishes, and contradictory pursuits? What happens in the most limited scene of national disturbance, will be found to exist during

the general convulsion of a state and country. Common danger will bring together the widest contradictions, make wealth and poverty unite, pride coalesce with humility, and all the jarring sentiments of the heart gather into mutual accommodation. It is not necessary to look back into the records of distant ages for proofs to these observations: the memorable year 1780, a period of eternal shame to the administration of Great Britain, sufficiently corroborates the assertion. To suppose, however, that an invariable form can be devised for principles in government, when no fixed point can be discovered where nature is uniform, and sentiment alike, is as extravagant as to believe that the most extended knowledge in astronomy could regulate the ocean, so as to promise a stated period and a measured force to tides and tempests. The darkness, with respect to  
futuraity,



futurity, even to the most probable occurrence, which is thrown before the brightest and most penetrating mind, powerfully proves the existence of some inscrutable and invisible power, by whom the universe is governed amidst the eternal errors of mankind. Beyond a certain and a very limited line, all is doubt and palpable mistake. Events take place as if they were intended to deride the affected wisdom of a creature, who thinks, but knows not how, and acts, but knows not why ; who makes precedents the rules of action, till time baffles the belief, and hard experience turns it into ridicule.

Systems of government may be suggested and accurately defined by theory, in the fond and visionary hope of possible completion ; plans and maxims may be given for the regulation of community ; but where

will theory find consistency of thought, and uniformity of conduct? In promulgating doctrines which must destroy subjection, where will its boasted principles discover a safe and permanent rule to make the governors and the governed steadfast to one system, and mutually cheerful in obedience and command?

Mankind\*, though equal in the abstract sense of the term, can never remain so in community. But this inequality, if properly modified, does not militate against the interest or happiness of any one constituent order, provided the wealth and adventitious superiority of the others be moderately progressive. Whenever the gradation ceases so abruptly that a wide chasm may be discovered between king and people, lords and commons, the efficient part of the army and the mere decorations of it, the

\* Vide Notes at the end.

man\* of service and the instrument of favour, but above all, between the dignified ecclesiastic and his humble drudge—when, in a word, instead of an easy descent from the head of administration to the lowest subject of the land, intervals are palpably felt, in which interest and speculation have taken their seats, discontent will gather in each part, and the operations of government be perpetually retarded by the murmurs of the multitude.

There is throughout creation a consciousness of order—instinct feels it in the brute, and reason cultivates it in man. Whenever that order is broken, a sense of its necessity readily suggests the means by which it may be restored; and however various from

\* Whilst the discipline of the Guards becomes an object of serious attention to the Duke that heads them, the inferiority of the Line in point of rank should not be passed unnoticed—let one be more, or the other less.  
each

each other the component parts may appear, when the system is renewed, to what they were before the struggles of contention, the same principle of general union will be felt, and the same maxims be pursued ; with this difference, that where the abuses in government had become so flagrantly gross as to require an almost total subversion, the political frame will not be put together with the same facility, that mere remedy might be applied to a few distempered parts. The situation of America, the moment she had accomplished her independence, was like a man rising from the bed of pain and sickness, after having struggled through a complicated mass of evil, and thrown from her constitution a rank disorder which secretly preyed upon it. Nor is she now, to use a medical term, beyond a state of critical convalescence. If natural strength and resolute resistance were necessary to overcome the violence of the attack,

attack, patience and internal concord were equally so, to bring her exhausted members to their former use and vigour: and to whom, in her infant struggles to regain the strength she had exhausted for the recovery of her health and freedom, and the expulsion of increasing evil and oppression, could she with more safety look, than to him who had watched her through every stage of the disease, warily baffled its progress, and at length completely forced it from her habit? If gratitude did not bind by the strictest sense of honour and obligation to the favour of her political existence, the uncertainty of human events would sufficiently instruct her to sacrifice every private consideration to an implicit confidence in a man, who, if he has ambition, enjoys it wholly within himself, and neither arrogates distinction from the claims of conquest, nor monopolizes property on the ground of service; who, if he is *virtually*

the



the chief of America—and mere names are of little import—discovers no other *actual* influence in the management of public concerns, than a wish for public utility imparts, and public confidence confirms. Here it must be acknowledged, the character and ostensible situation of General Washington are far superior to the most splendid monarch that ever filled a throne—but this superiority is partial, and the effect it now produces must, perhaps, be temporary. When comparison excludes contingency, it can only hold good during the actual existence of two objects placed in contrast to each other, under one point of view; circumstance, time, interest and ambition, and every affection of the mind and heart must be perfectly congruous before any conclusion can be drawn, or similar effect be ascertained. To exhibit a character of private and unexampled worth, unambitiously co-operating with the partakers of his toils and dangers ;

dangers ; to establish system and permanent security, where all was waste and desolate, disordered and perplexed, in argument against the settled principles of government in other countries, is to pass infancy against manhood, experiment against experience, and individual virtue against the vicissitudes of mingled interests. When the calamities of war, and the solitudes ever attendant upon the recovery of its object, shall have gradually sunk from the fresh remembrance of the survivors ; when cultivation and commerce shall have restored to the citizen and farmer the long-lost fruits of industry and speculation ; when upon the waste of property, plenty shall be seen to rise, and luxury to spread the surplus of necessity ; when Washington shall have yielded to the call of time, or the hand of sickness, and few, or none, shall be found, who, like him, were influenced by public motives  
 against

against the dictates of private interest and advantage ; when commerce and speculation growing into a superfluity of wealth, shall second the eternal impulse of ambition, and territory be made an object of pursuit ; when the aggrandizement of private families, the natural consequence and the certain result of ease and affluence, shall supersede the present spirit of equality ; when alliances, by affixing bounds to territorial possessions, shall have wakened among others, fear and jealousy ; and when offensive and defensive treaties shall be rendered indispensably necessary to preserve tranquillity and peace ; when the social institutions at home, as well as the political compacts abroad, shall stand in need of coercion ; when the executive shall be called in to support the legislative power against the incroachments of pride, interest and ambition ; when these events shall have come to pass—and arrive they must

must while there are passions in man—where will the Utopian promise of universal concord, peace, and philanthropy discover a spot to which the proselytes of a visionary doctrine may fly from the jarring principles of human imperfection? That spot, I fear, though pictured to the eye of theory, with all the views of probable acquisition, will disappear at the approach of practice, and leave speculation to find its error in a wide waste of baffled expectation.

Although, in making this digression from the immediate object of my preface, I may appear to have trespassed largely upon the patience of the public, the discerning reader will be pleased to remark, that the observations are not wholly foreign to my subject; whilst I make it my aim and study to point out the corrupted parts of our constitution, and the abuses which have crept into government,

vernment, by an unbiaſſed exhibition of ſuch characters as diſgrace them both, it is my pride to publiſh ſentiments I willingly indulge, becauſe I feel them ſanctioned by experience.—If I ſhould be wrong, the wiſer part of my countrymen may be roused to a proper inveſtigation of the moſt important queſtion that ever affected the peace and intereſt of individuals, or taught kings and miniſters to feel the heavy weight of juſt adminiſtration. With regard to the inſtances of abuſe which the ſubſequent work will ſpread out in all the colours of undiſſembled facts, I can only ſay, that truth ſhall not yield to fear, nor my own perſonal ſafety keep back expoſure. I will ſtep forward in a country where liberty of ſpeech and freedom of diſcuſſion are not reſtrained by law, becauſe the legiſlators cannot face enquiry; and when England ſhall have given ſubſtance to the ſhadow of its beaſted liberty,

berty,



erty, it will be my dearest glory to venerate a government which only wants correction.

Having shewn, without entering into much detail, the impropriety of comparison between General Washington, as the moving principle of action in America, and a king in Europe, as the first gilded link of concatenated society, and consequently the fallacious precedent that some writers would wish to establish from the tranquil state of a country which is just emerging into government, for the corrupted administration of one that is departing from what was originally good, I shall continue my first remark upon regulated community.

Against a subversion of rank and ostensible situation, and the levelling of name and  
F                      character,

character, it would be superfluous to offer arguments, when a reference to ancient and modern experience forcibly shews the nonsense of equality. Considered merely as men, there is no difference between individuals ; but they must be separately left upon the uncultivated wilds of creation, unvisited by reason, and uninstructed by observation, to remain in a constant state of unrestrained humanity. Civilization, as I have already observed, first produced society—society gave rise to order, and order to subjection. In the earliest periods of community, as far back as history can trace, we find subordination necessary, and, however slender the domain, some sort of government indispensable. Tradition must be made up of romance, and the most sacred truths conveyed in holy writ the jargon of invention, if we can for a moment believe that man was ever placed upon one  
 general

general level, neither marked out by interest, nor divided by ambition. But in allowing this necessity of order (the visible result and the leading principle of nature), it would be ridiculous to maintain that abrupt distinctions, unmerited superiority, and galling insolence, the certain consequence of titled folly, should be tamely suffered to inroach upon native right and social privilege. It is sufficient for talents, worth and information to remain obscured where accident of birth, force of prejudice, or want of patronage—that modern source of all that is venal, and certain grave of all that is virtuous—have originally confined it, without being obliged to feel oppressed in the most extended prostitution of public wealth and honour. But let it not be inferred from this that an abolition of any one existing order would remedy the evils that have insensibly found their way into the very vitals of the constitution ; or that the substituting

other names for what must be alike in effect and practice, would make the government of Great Britain better in principle, or more congenial to the country when administered according to the spirit of its institution. The only alteration which, perhaps, might with safety be attempted, would be an annihilation of every title to which some efficient and visible function of state is not attached. King, lords and commons, constitute the mixed administration of England; but there is as little occasion for a marquis in the House of Lords, considered merely as such, as there would be for a knight of the golden fleece, or solar star, in the Commons. Each estate being a restraint and check upon the other, and all acting upon principles hitherto found adequate to the useful purposes of government, it matters very little whether the ostensible mediums through which those principles pass, be

be actually less brilliant than others, provided there is wisdom enough to afford them vigour and effect. On this account kings may be safely allowed the advantages of birthright, because they cannot commit an outrage against good government, without involving their co-agents in the mal-administration; and the country must be unfortunate indeed, not to possess some sensible corrective in the lords or commons, to prevent the bad effects of royal imbecility. When a puppet is ridiculously handed about, the fault does not lie with the passive instrument of mirth and entertainment, but with the mover. For which reason a clear and unequivocal reply to the following question, respecting hereditary succession—of kings especially—will, perhaps, afford a wider field for investigation, than has yet appeared in vague assertion, and ill-directed satire. Before I submit it, I must be al-



lowed the necessity for a first order, and the propriety of mixed authority.

If next to the safe enjoyment of life and freedom, the calm and unmolested possession of liberty be universally holden as the dearest bond and tenure in community ; if for their preservation the strictest laws and regulations have been enacted, and things themselves—in governments less limited than ours—have been amenable to them from time immemorial, it may not be absurd to inquire when, and by what proportion of curtailment, or sequestration, inheritance should be conveyed out of the hands of imbecility into those of wisdom and information ? The crown of Great Britain and its appurtenances, having been the gift of the body-compact of the people to the House of Hanover, is as fully the inheritable property of the Brunswick family, as the  
smallest

smallest acre, or the most extended manor, is the right of an individual—with this difference, that, in many instances, the one can alienate and bequeath away his effects and land, the other can only dispose of mere personal fortune. Consequently it is not at kingly authority and situation, but at the absurd contradictions and dangerous innovations of kings and princes ; not at nobility, but at the pride and insolence of the nobles ; not at ecclesiastical institutions, but at the enormous growth of ecclesiastical preferment, and the profligacy of the upper clergy ; not at parliaments, but at the venality of their members ; not at religion—perhaps the tainted source of all our present plans of absurd humanity to nations that will return the kindness, by endeavouring hereafter to crush their benefactors—but at its introduction to systems of policy that government requires, and religion cannot

aid ; it is at the perversion of these indispensable forms and situations, that justice should direct her attention, and candour its correction. These are abuses that call aloud for reformation ; and such as ministers might easily rectify—they have proofs before them, that sufficiently point out the necessity of attending to the undissembled murmurs of the land ; and however secure they may appear in concentrated influence, the time has been, when the language of the sword and bayonet was answered by the axe and scaffold. Unsatisfied remonstrance flies to that last resort, and courts are severely taught to feel the absurdity of specious denial when the multitude rise into blunt demand. Should they be reduced to this alternative, they will probably, in following the example of a neighbouring country, make the correction of abuse, though equally severe and summary, more immediately

immediately effectual. But they will have wisdom enough to guard against the excesses of temporary triumph, and whilst they cast away corruption, to preserve the frame and spirit of a constitution, which is at least equal to the best, if properly administered, and even *now* superiour to many, with all its adventitious errors. They will not annihilate distinction, because the court is corrupt, nor destroy subordination, because the leaders are oppressive. When they visit the palace, they will not wantonly insult its owner, because he has been misled, or revel in its most secret recesses because they know that the undue influence of a ——— and favourites has been constantly seated in them, to mar the wishes of the public in every hour of exigence and trouble: they will not break into the sanctuaries of religion for the purposes of violation, because there are glaring instances of dissolute

lute impiety among the clergy ; nor scatter the hoarded treasures of the church among the peasantry, because the tithes have been known unequal and their exaction oppressive : they will not turn the emancipated soldier against his officer, because command has been misused, and authority ill-directed ; nor will they spur on the flighted veteran of the line, the insulted marine, and the ill-requited sailor, to break through the prætorian insolence of a few, to bare to their blinded sovereign the wounds of service festered by neglect ; to shew subalterns marked by the burning suns of India and Africa, and grown grey in the unremitted duties of their profession, oppressed by patronage, and superseded by boys promoted from the school or cradle—No ! the natural good sense of Englishmen will prevent the licentious spirit of revolt ; experience will point them to the safer system of reformation

tion



tion at the expence of a few devoted drones and locusts, government will be restored to its proper action, and public utility be gradually attached to every rank and situation. But neither kings, courts, nor parliaments will be found so useless, or rather so necessarily productive of crimes, as the advocates for broad democracy would attempt to prove.

I am now, as much to my own satisfaction, as it must unquestionably be to that of my reader, on whose indulgence I have largely trespassed, getting to the conclusion of a preface, out of which I have hitherto excluded personal remarks, because I wished to be candid and unbiaſſed : differing, however, as I moſt thoroughly do, from the generality of writers on the popular ſubject of revolution, I am unavoidably led to a ſhort  
discussion

discussion of a strange declaration respecting kings and courts in general.

Mr. Pain—who appears to have some religion, and to be actuated by some sort of belief—endeavouring to prove the absurdity of kings and courts, gives the following curious account of the leading principle of every government that has ever yet been instituted. I shall quote the passage, and leave the public at large to make their comments; previously remarking, that unless Mr. P. and the preachers of universal philanthropy, can establish some system by which the infirmities of human nature, its passions and propensities, may be made subservient to it, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain before the flood, when neither kings nor courts existed; the disputes of Israel after, and the unremitted quarrels of every quarter of the habitable globe, down  
to

to the present hour, will easily confute the reasonings of philosophy, and either prove that the calamities of creation reflect little honour upon the Creator, or that, jumbled together by the hand of chance, the scattered atoms are only *now* assuming system and disposition, and mingling together so as never more to jar or fret against each other; a doctrine as diametrically opposite to experience, as the supposition must be disgraceful to good sense.

Speaking of the first origin of kingly governments, not even excepting those which, from the unquestioned page of scriptural tradition, we are taught to believe were the immediate dictates of Omniscience (and neither Mr. Pain nor any of his adherents appear to doubt the authenticity), he emphatically exclaims—"What scenes of horror, what perfection of iniquity present them-

themselves in contemplating the character, and reviewing the history of such governments! If we would delineate human nature with a baseness of heart, and hypocrisy of countenance, that reflection would shudder at, and humanity disown, it is \* kings, courts and cabinets, that must sit for the portrait. Man, naturally as he is, with all his faults about him, is not up to the character." Yet Cain, the first-born of Adam, and the first visible instance of his Maker's displeasure, after the expulsion from Paradise, was guilty of a more heinous crime than any one of the present kings, courts or cabinets of Europe, can be separately reproached with. He had in his individual

\* The gallantry of David with the wife of another man, the amours of Solomon, and a long list of the vilest crimes that ever marked creation, are not, I presume, excluded from the catalogue; nor is the first rebellion in Paradise to be left unnoticed—yet these were the chosen of God!

character the same predominant passions of ambition and jealousy that have ever since deformed (and there is much reason to believe they ever will) the annals of mankind. A little further, Mr. Pain, with a mistaken zeal for humanity, such as is engendered betwixt pride and hypocrisy, *speciously* asks—for the question cannot hold with experience, nor grow from sound policy—"What inducement has the farmer, while following the plough, to lay aside his peaceful pursuits, and go to war with the farmer of another country? or what inducement has the manufacturer? What is dominion to them, or to any class of men in a nation? Does it add an acre to any man's estate, or raise its value? Are not conquest and defeat each of the same price\*, and taxes the never  
failing

\* Much in the same manner that sunshine and rain, a blighting frost, or cherishing temperature of air, are  
similar



failing consequence? Though this reasoning may be good to a nation, it is not to a government—war is the Pharo-table of governments, and nations the dupes of the game.”

*Q U E R E.*

If war be the Pharo-table of government, yet conquest and defeat good reasoning to a nation, how can nations be the dupes of a game confessedly to their advantage?

This string of interrogation, closed by a palpable contradiction, might suit the members of a pious conventicle, to bind up for a time the zealot's passions; but if thrown round the complicated systems of society,

similar to each other, when no foresight of the farmer can provide against the uncertainty of elements; but whose irruption and waste must be followed by a double exertion of toil and industry, which constitute the tax that is laid upon us by nature.

the

the jarring interests of individuals, the broils of families, and the jealousies of nations (which no mode of government can ever effectually destroy, nor reciprocity connect) time will unloose the knot, and gradually admit discord of opinion, and all the tumult of opposing sentiments. It might not be ridiculous, and I cannot think it will be construed into malevolence, to ask this singular questioner of the Rights of Kings, this mysterious leveller of rank, and universal sceptic in government, what first induced *him* to quit the peaceful acres of his native ground, for noise and public contention? If from the pure disinterested motive to do good, the spot which gave him birth might surely have claimed some portion of his care and talents. Safe in the conscious rectitude of a life well spent, and urged by principles properly directed, *he* had nothing to apprehend from malice or disgust. The bonds of do-

G

mestic

domestic truth, the sacred ties of friendship, and  
 the honest calls of industry, had by *him* been  
 religiously observed, and answered with  
 alacrity. Expensive schemes and hazardous  
 enterprizes, when futile and abortive, were  
 by *him* most honourably diverted from the  
 ruin of a friend or creditor, by steadfastly  
 facing the wreck of trusted property, and  
 by unremitted exertions to repair the loss—  
 Prospects of ease and riches, however allur-  
 ing to the mind of speculative ambition,  
 however tempting to goaded necessity, never  
 drew *him* from the most sacred engagements  
 to leave to the lot of chance abused con-  
 fidence and stabbed affection : *he*, careless  
 of his own freedom and repose, shrunk  
 from the gilded vision, patiently to endure  
 the hardships of struggling industry ; and  
 when invited by the patriarch of western  
 independence, from an anxious state of ad-  
 versity, to a probable share of comforts be-  
 yond

yond the reach and murmur of distress, *he*—just and honest man!—smiled at the wants about him, clasped the loved partner of his cares and troubles, and rather than desert the wife, or defraud the creditor, clung to his native land, till, with an unbroken persevering spirit, he had gloriously struggled through the embarrassments of private life, cancelled his obligations, and convinced mankind that if he was not fortunate, he was just and upright. The love of gain operated no further upon a mind fraught with unbounded philanthropy, than the future good of his countrymen; he had neither passion to answer, nor interest to promote: the same calm and even temper, which in the noise and bustle of a privateer—another name for pirate—first planned the glorious emancipation of the world from the thralldom of kings and ministers, was kept unruffled by distress. Like another apostle, he

visited the land of strangers, to enlighten the ignorant, and, in a conscious triumph of integrity, flew to the assistance of dawning liberty beyond the Atlantic. The corrupted state of Europe in general, and the perversion of government in every country, but most especially in England, had weaned him from the dearer calls of his native land ; while *common sense* convinced him, that, unassisted by the great, not impeded by wealth, and totally unknown beyond the records of excise, he could not break through the obscurity which hung about him, to drag from usurped dominion, the superfluous bugbear of a king, and to pour upon the people at large the unchequered beams of indefeasible right. I shall here close a very feeble sketch of unexampled worth and self-denial, which the world may believe or discredit as it suits opinion or corresponds with reality, by observing that where nature has been so un-

bounded



bounded in her gift of sense and understanding, so lavish of unprecedented virtue and wide benevolence, some little degree of consideration should be had for the frailties of others. It is not from the pure and uncontaminated source of perfect government within, nor from the unblemished dictates of a godly mind, that forms of administration should be drawn for pride, interest, prejudice and folly. Impracticable systems only serve to bewilder the well-inclined, and to excite ridicule in the bad. Excessive rigour, like extreme indulgence, is generally absurd, and always unproductive. We must therefore rest satisfied in the awful contemplation of such exalted virtue as the Rights of Man discover, should experience justify belief; if not, pity the disguise, and leave the secret disturber of public tranquillity to exclaim with the knave in Horace—

Jane Pater, clare, clare cum dixit Apollo;

Labra movet metuens audiri: Pulchra Laverna,

Da mihi fallere ; da justum sanctumque videri :  
Noctem peccatis, et fraudibus objice nubem\*.

Far be it from the writer of this preface to insinuate, that, blunt and unadorned as the language of the Rights of Man is, and perfectly accordant to the garb and look of the author, the whole should be assumed, and like the piety of a Cromwell, or a Mahomet, adopted to seduce the ignorant.

Two

\* For the benefit of those who, following the footsteps of their apostle, turn from every path that can lead to antiquity, and despise classic ground, because the Rights of Man are not compatible with education, I have taken the liberty to give Mr. Smart's plain translation of the above lines——

“ After he has pronounced in a clear distinguishable voice, O Father Janus, O Apollo—(please to observe that Janus was the god of hypocrisy, and Apollo the god of fiction, a modified term for *lie*)”—he *then* moves his lips, *as one* afraid of being heard. ‘O Fair Laverna!

—‘ put

Two wonderful Wills of the wisp, equally calculated to mislead, seem of late to have occupied public attention. It is possible—but to a man acquainted with human nature it will appear improbable, that either of these lights may possess the solid substance of evangelic illumination, or the unche—  
 —‘ put it in my power to deceive mankind ; grant me  
 ‘ the appearance of a just and upright man : throw a  
 ‘ cloud of night over my fraudulent practices.’

To the few who do not entirely despise refined and ornamented expression, though frequently the growth of courts, I beg leave to submit a free translation—

First clear, as nature with unvarnish'd face,  
 Or candour breathing unaffected grace,  
 In echo's ear his ready lips rehearse ;  
 “ O father Janus, and thou God of verse—”  
 Then softly shrinking into silent fear,  
 Like one that trembles lest the world should hear,  
 “ O fair Laverna, give me to deceive,  
 And teach unguarded mortals to believe ;  
 In darkest midnight be my fraud conceal'd,  
 Or in the garb of honesty reveal'd.”

quered beams of reason and experience. We see one fixed upon a bright horizon\*, furrounded on every side with tropes, figures and metaphors, earnestly gazed at by the admirers of wealth and title, and followed through the gilded mazes of wonder-working chivalry; the other in the simple rays of nature, floats across the desert, endeavouring to attract, within the narrow circle of uncultivated manhood, the ignorant and unhappy—the puritan mistakes one for the leading star of wisdom and religion; the sycophant and tool of court fondly hopes in the other an increased and permanent display of grandeur, however grinding to the land at large; while a sort of well-disposed half-reasoning crowd hang upon conjecture between aristocratic pride and democratic madness. Community in

\* See Mr. Burke's description of royal *chastity* and beauty.

the aggregate is thus divided by partial principles into two extremes, without being benefited by either.

To steer between them, however difficult the task, should, in the necessity of the hour, be the first care and principle of government. The eyes of the people are feverishly turned to one point—they feel the vessel of state tossed, and thrown out of the wind, by some mismanagement at the helm—the political compass like the nautical, although it unvariably turns to the north, lies buried in a mist of impenetrable interest and cabal, and leaves ambition or intrigue to blunder through its course. A parapet, as I have already remarked, is thrown before corruption, and the quarter-deck of what contains a general venture, is crowded by private speculation and dazzled weakness. Hence the unnecessary increase of modern nobility,



nobility, and the unequal distribution of rank. Merit stands labouring at the mast, toils and watches through the storm, to be repaid by taunts, or injured by oppression. The few in command with unmolested security revel in the calm, and only mingle with their fellow adventurers, when danger calls them forth. If this be government, the people that support it, deserve abuse and degradation ; but this is neither the constitution, nor the intended government of Great Britain : this is a perversion of them both, and should be rectified. A wide disparity between man and man, though inequality be essentially requisite in the administration of things, never entered among the principles of mixed community ; nor was title given to disgust the commoner. Reason and instinct justify distinction: the brute has his leader, and man his follower : but adventitious superiority, by birth or fortune, is no  
excuse

excuse for tyranny. It is an inherent principle of human nature to aspire ; and although we may respect the situation of a superior, or esteem the man, if virtuous, yet we cannot love the difference it makes between us.

In the political as in the human system, a certain quantity of gall is requisite ; but should a redundancy take place, what before contributed to the welfare of the internal economy of the frame, becomes seriously detrimental ; and if allowed to strengthen, must eventually taint the mass, and bring on general disease. Nobility, to carry on the allusion, may not improperly be called the gall-bladder of community. It either invigorates, by a happy mixture, the aggregate of a nation, and corrects excess by being a moderate solvent, or, bursting beyond its limits, affects the nobler parts, breaks down the solid structure  
of

of social unity, and finally dissolves exhausted freedom. It is said—I will not answer for the truth of the assertion—that among other sage provisions for the good government of a northern country, one exists, in which accident of birth is never regarded when the proper management of the state requires exertion and ability. To use a trite expression, they nip the evil in its bud. The possibility of general mischief is guarded against, by an effectual removal of the partial cause. This observation, however, can only concern despotic monarchy. In a mixed government no danger can arise from the natural weakness of an individual, however dignified with name, and exalted by authority, provided the several component parts of the constitution remain steady to their trust, and mutually check each other. That the king *can do no wrong*, is, politically speaking, a maxim perfectly consensaneous

taneous to the good administration of things in this country. But he is only negatively perfect, if I may use the expression, from not having the power to do evil, whilst the integrity of his counsel deprives him of the means, and the other\* branches of the legislature are a check upon his advisers. He is the apex of a pyramid gradually rising from the broad base of the people to the extreme point of rank and exaltation, and only placed beyond the lowest in community to keep together in regular ascent the circles which compose it. The nearer approach of others, the more conspicuous is their situation; the more glaring their defects, and the more splendid their excellencies. Every

\* Selden observes,—That the three estates are the lords temporal, the bishops for the clergy, and the commons, as some would have it. *Take heed of that;* for then, if two agree, the third is involved; but he is king of the three estates.

circle

circle has its own individual consequence and weight within certain restrictions; but is never independent of the whole. When any of the efficient parts in the upper orders, particularly those nearest to the apex—the *ostensible* source of action—extend the influence of their situation so as to widen at the top, the unjust proportion is soon felt by the lower circles, the pressure visibly affects the base, and the whole arrangement of progressive policy directing nature, quickly separates into partial divisions, till at length anarchy is seen where all was uniform and beautiful\*.

It

\* Among various other causes which, if not speedily obviated, must bring about a dissolution of our present structure of government, I do not know any so probable as the increase of peerages, the partial gift of places, the perversion of the law, the unjust distinctions in the army, the sale of boroughs, and the prostitution of industry to enrich the clergy. With respect to the nobi-



It will not be difficult to conclude from the preceding observations that my political tenets (and every individual, however insignificant he may appear, has an unalienable right to opinion) are as far removed from levelling democracy, as they are remote

lity—I mean hereditary, for I do not wish to anticipate my work by mentioning the lately-created—no material impediment to good government can arise from its present representatives, if the M—n—r will have virtue enough to refuse the tender of imbecillity. Their own follies will insensibly turn into the channels of public utility, private inheritance. And experience hourly convinces us, that, by some wise ordination in nature, the useless members of society dwindle from degeneracy into total oblivion—hence the extinction of titles. To fill up the vacancy, being the dictate of salutary wisdom, is the immediate duty of the king and minister—The subsequent work will prove, beyond bare assertion, how far the late objects of notice accord with the fair principles of just creation.

*Sed videt hunc omnis domus et vicina tota ;  
Introrsum turpem, speciosum pelle decorâ.*

from

from despotism and aristocracy. A total annihilation of one or the other is the favourite object of two parties, which may convulse, but cannot benefit society. It is the fatality of man when he condemns one extreme, to invariably stumble upon the other\*. Genius and understanding, even the most refined, seldom preserve that happy element, where there is a bay in which the shattered bark of murmuring subjection may repair the wreck, or the proud vessel

\* The most ridiculous declaration that perhaps ever came from the lips of a sensible man, is still maintained by the champion of one extreme in politics, and another, equally absurd, as strenuously supported by his antagonist. On the one hand the constitution of this country is so delicately framed that it cannot bear correction, though visibly defective from the introduction of abuses; and on the other it is so inherently bad, that nothing but a dissolution of the whole can preserve the structure.

— Si totus illabatur orbis,  
Impavidum ferient ruinæ,

I

of

of dominion may dismiss a superfluity of equipage. It would be difficult, I trust, for either the refined ideas of Mr. Burke, or the unbounded enthusiasm of his opponent, to lay the foundations of a nobler structure than the original uncorrupted constitution of Great Britain: but it would not be impossible nor arduous for men of meaner capacity than the first possessors, or less zeal than the latter, to visit the encroachments of time, and by a timely foresight to eradicate some rooted evils\*. Instead of employing the discriminating powers of mental observation, and

\* However inveterate many of the known evils in government may appear, there is not one so truly deplorable as to require an *immediate* dissolution of the member it has reached. We are not yet arrived at that height of corruption when it will be necessary to exclaim with the able surgeon——

*Est immedicabile, et ense rescindendum!*

H

hazarding

hazarding opinions from temper or convenience, the cause in which they severally engage might derive real advantage from the united efforts of temperate reformation. As well might the powers of a Demosthenes be exerted to prove the goodness of virtue, as the enlightened part of Englishmen exhaust their time and talents in simply telling us that the original principles of this government were wise and salutary. The test they have stood, sufficiently proves their efficacy, and the good we have derived from a proper management of power, is too visible to run the risk of innovation. Let the situation of every subject be what the original compact between king and people agreed to make it, and the splendour of royalty will never be obscured by murmur and discontent: but the instant that a king or minister departs from it, the confidence of the people turns into doubt; necessary regulations

tions are questioned because trespasses have been made where there was no necessity to exact ; and where there would have been cheerful acquiescence, nothing is seen but reluctant compliance or secret opposition. Our present situation, notwithstanding the boasted picture of finance, plainly proves the justness of this remark. But the fault does not lie in the original constitution ; it is in the misjudged application, or in the wilful perversion of its principles. However loaded by needless appendages the branches of the tree may be, it is still the oak, and solid at the heart and root. The gilded trifles which interest or caprice have hung about them may, with the same facility by which they were attached, be safely shaken off. But in so doing we should be scrupulously circumspect lest, by the violence of removing parts, a shock be given to the whole. There are abuses, the cor-



rection of which rests entirely with the senate of a country\*, and which cannot affect public tranquillity if remedied by wisdom and discernment.

Pride and self-accommodation—the inseparable companions of falsehood and misrepresentation—too often influence for unanimity to act with all the zeal of generous

\* A reform in the representation of the people, a more equal distribution of church property, a modification of the laws of excise and arrest, an unequivocal repeal of penal statutes that are neither sanctioned by time nor by circumstance, a spirit of equality breathed into the navy and army, by the dissolution of unnecessary partial rank, and the removal of injurious patronage; but above all, the slavery of the press, in which, as in a mirror, every abuse is seen—these are objects of investigation, and concerns in state, that parliament alone can canvass and correct: but when the remedy is in the hands of parliament, only to be slighted by it, the application soon falls into those of the people, and the evil is removed by a more summary process.

conviction.

conviction. To be lavish of encomiums in public, and privately to censure, seems the leading principle of modern parties. But this were of little import, if personal opinion did not involve national concern, and the substance of the latter were not shaded to neglect by the collected shadows of the former. We have still before us two instances of the most unexampled acknowledgment on one side of the House of Commons, and an equally unrelenting principle on the other. Whether sincerity proved the spring and impulse of the former, and pride or disappointment estranged the latter, are questions as uninteresting to the reader, as their subject of altercation was useless to the country. It is only to be lamented that the united talents of both are not weaned from a prodigality of fruitless disquisition and theoretical speculation, to the calm and candid review of what is

transacting here. With regard to the causes which have produced the most unparalleled revolution that has ever marked the page of history, it would be an insult to the most confined understanding to attempt a discussion of them, when the picture has been so flagrantly drawn throughout the whole of the present and almost the two preceding French reigns\*. The unbounded dissoluteness of the nobles rendered oppression unavoidably necessary to support the cravings of hungry dis-

\* There never, perhaps, existed a fairer opportunity to illustrate the remarkable Latin adage, *Fas et ab hoste doceri*, than the one before us. The many warnings which France received, even so far back as during the reign of Lewis XIV. but especially during that of his successor, when the parliaments were exiled, should teach this country to look seriously into every abuse, and voluntarily to correct what must eventually be removed by the harshest means.

*Serius aut citius metam properamus ad unam.*

sipation.

sipation. The wheels of government were consequently clogged to supply the excess of church and state ; and however well calculated—for it unquestionably was—the mode of administration may have been for the extent of the country and the disposition of the inhabitants, its functions were perpetually interrupted by the intrusion of fresh incumbrances. Luxury clung to every spoke, whilst indolence, indulged up on the nave, gave tyranny the centre-point to oppress and gall community : till roused by a consciousness of wrong, and no longer able to supply the apparent deficiencies of state for which no adequate return was given, the multitude ran maddening to the source ; and, as our immortal countryman describes the impulse of general resentment, they severally exclaimed—

Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune, all you gods  
In general synod, take away her powers ;

H 4

Break

Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheels,  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heav'n!

How effectually the wish was answered by the concurrence of the land, the memorable destruction of the Bastille, the temporary captivity of the king, and the expulsion of the princes, sufficiently prove. Whatever may be the ultimate decision of the country with respect to government, whether forced or voluntary, the strictest advocate for the old establishment will not deny an eventual certainty of good. When monarchy\* shall be restored, as it unquestionably will be, kings will have been severely taught the instability of power, by  
the

\* The idle and unmanly triumph of a few short-sighted democrats on the assassination of the king of Sweden, will probably place monarchy in a fairer point



the degradation of Louis the Sixteenth, and providently warned against similar excesses by the anarchy they have occasioned. The people, satisfied in the removal of abuses, will return to allegiance with the more alacrity, because they will have been powerfully shewn that, however beneficial the fever of revolt might prove for a time to the body compact, the frenzy, if not prudently quelled, must be destructive. In throwing open the gates of corruption, they were made intimately acquainted with the lurking evils of the great; they saw the baseness of court-intrigue in all its colours, stripped it of its outward garb, and dragged the tawdry gew-gaw into light; they saw,

of view than it has hitherto appeared—Excess generally foils itself.

For virtue self may too much zeal be had;  
The worst of madmen is a faint run mad.

POPE.

under

under the mask of honour and good faith, and pious resignation in the dignified clergy\*, guilt and deceit, and arrogant oppression, men, whom they had been taught to reverence as the selected channels of devotion, they saw miserably plunged in infamous debauchery; found sanctity the veil of

\* It is not only *plain sense*, but good reason, to ask the bench of bishops whether a full enjoyment of all the luxuries in town and country, public exhibitions, balls, concerts, hounds, phaetons and horses, cards and dice, billiards and tennis, private mistresses and public concubines, be not the fittest avenues to arrive at spiritual perfection, and to obtain the confidence of the poor and ignorant? Paths, less marked by public infamy, led the clergy of France from esteem and veneration, not only to a forfeiture of both, but to a debasement of character and situation, from which superstition itself will not be able to raise them. Mankind are no longer to be deluded by appearance, or talked into belief by temporary piety; nor will they be satisfied with hearing the trite expression, *Do as we say, not as we do*. They now look to facts and to example, and when neither exist, they justly strike at the deceit.

vice, and every character assumed the varnish of corruption. They saw nobility, anciently the price of virtue, distinguished from themselves by no other marks than those of insolence and folly: the wealth which was intended for the support of honourable greatness, they saw lavished for the basest ends; and as title made fools conspicuous, they saw them, in their desertion of every principle which renders it valuable, like spots upon the sun, a species of lowering darkness that oppressed the light. They saw, infinitely more disgusting, royalty sunk from the splendid orb of dignity and grandeur, into a thin and visionary gleam, that, like the glow-worm, having no heat within itself, could not afford any to others. But they did not imbibe the wanton intoxication or the speculative madness of a licentious spirit, which, after having cleared the wheels of government, will not seriously

seriously fet them in motion ; nor did they, although fully convinced that kings may be sometimes less than men, see a necessity to let go the chain of order and subjection, or to scatter its links upon the whirlwind of opinion. *Native right*, they saw, could not exist beyond the desert and the wood ; and whether one order of community were called Imperial, Royal, or Serene, and with the consent of the whole acknowledged to be *first*, and the others were gathered into an aggregate, and called the *second*, *middle*, or the *last*, event, they saw, would finally prove that the sage regulation of public affairs does not depend upon title or appellation, nor the exercise of authority rendered more effectual by whimsical innovation.

Mistakes in government, as well as in religion, scarcely ever arise from a defect in the original principles of the whole, but almost

most always from a wilful misinterpretation of parts. To doom any fabric or town to universal dilapidation because a single column is faulty, or a quarter of the place infected, without first endeavouring to correct or replace the one, and purify the other, is as absurd in policy, as it would be in medicine to poison a man at once, because his leg was broken, or his intellects deranged. The last twelve months have teemed with productions, which, if viewed by the impartial, will be found to contain little more than common truths, tortured by uncommon means into the fantastic forms of speculative ideas. The struggle of controversy does not appear to have grappled with falsehood and error for general good and information, but to have directed the aim of public discussion at private talents, and under the garb of patriotism and philanthropy to have kept in ambush party-spite and personal



sonal aversion. From such a source we cannot be surprised if fanaticism, interest, and ambition, have mingled with the stream of national concern; and although they may not have infected the whole mass of politics, they have sufficiently branched out to create murmur and dissatisfaction \*. Tempo-

\* Such has been the mistaken notion of opposition, and so perverted the first principle of the constitution, which only meant to hold out a check upon administration against the natural propensities of men in power, that the common passage-boats between Dover and Calais are distinguished by party. Party has its favourite hotel, party has its packet; and if party could exist abroad, there would probably be two diligences for the separate conveyance of the orange and the blue and buff adherents from London to Paris. Even the church is divided by the prejudices of faction; and we may not be surprised to see the cassock decorated with a coloured band, as indicative of the owner's political sentiments, to which the pulpit has never yet been shut; but against which true religion has ever warned its teachers.

rary

rary grandeur, built upon the shifting sands  
 of commerce and convention, and doubly  
 splendid from the contrast of clouded rivalry,  
 may delude the leaders of administration  
 into an apathy to all that can be said or  
 written: but as *they* best know where the  
 rankness of abuse is fostered and indulged,  
 where the influence of the crown exceeds,  
 and the participation of favour is warped  
 into the convenience of individuals; as  
*they* best know how public property is  
 drained for private purposes, and the repre-  
 sentation of the land made subservient to  
 caballistical finance; how titles and every  
 honourable post and pension are lavished  
 upon themselves or friends, to the degrada-  
 tion of worth and genius; and as *they* best  
 know, in the rottenness of experience, the  
 filthy nature of each blotch that preys  
 upon the constitution, the quackery that  
 gilds the pill to lull us into peace and for-  
 bearance;

bearance ; as *they* best know the insignificance of modern grandeur by the sale and purchase of its titles, and can make the treasury of a once glorious nation little better than an advertising office for the accommodation of interest and ambition ; it should be *their* business, and the wish of their sovereign, to check the abuses of men and measures ; to give energy to what is miserably relaxed, to make nobility the seat of honour and desert, and to convince mankind that if the list of pensioners and peers increases on one side, worth and ability do not diminish on the other. It should be *their* business (possessing the power to create distinctions) not to exert their influence, or that of the crown, at the disheartening neglect of skill and understanding, or to rest their consequence, as statesmen, upon the venal ground of parliamentary interest. The unequal representation under which we have the  
justest

justest cause to murmur, the tyranny of the clergy in general over the industrious, and the oppressive tithes on which their several departments fatten, without even the appearance of utility, can only be equalled by the wanton distribution of rank and situation, to the visible debasement of real exaltation, and the certain corruption of minds ill adapted to distinction.

The evil, however, would be less productive, and the mischief less extended, if, with the life of the individual, the title ceased. Knighthood \*, which was anciently the test of valour and nobility, is now no more than a mimicry of rank, without one ingredient

\* The disrepute, indeed the ridicule, into which this once respectable order is fallen, may be so easily traced to the real cause, that any opinion on the subject must be superfluous: nevertheless it may not be impossible to

ingredient to afford consequence and worth. Events the most trifling, and frequently the most ridiculous, will drag from the remotest quarter of the realm the rude and the unlettered to receive a plume, which neither exalts the individuals nor benefits the

make even absurdity beneficial to the state. Our friends the Germans are prodigal of orders and honorary marks; but they wisely lay vanity under contribution, by affixing prices to each title. The present age, I am fully convinced, affords the surest market, if ministers would openly convert to the profits of the country what they secretly use for influence. An office, where different orders might be bought, without producing any other effect upon community than mere nominal distinction, would draw from the other side of Temple Bar the rich insignificance of many, and be a perpetual influx to the treasury. Acts of valour and magnanimous exploits we can no longer look for, as the bright hour of chivalry is sunk in the extinguished pomp and *chastity* of France. I must not quit this note without exclaiming with a gentleman well known to the subsequent work,

Credat Judæus apella, non ego!

country.



country. They are a species of negative additions, without increasing the splendour of the power which raised them into momentary notice, or deriving any internal dignity from being rendered the merest gewgaws of distinction.

From these general observations the reader may perhaps easily foresee the drift and meaning of the work which is to follow: but he will be widely mistaken should he suspect that the author's object is to depreciate the private man at the expence of candour and good-sense. If he be not deeply impressed with the abused idea that greatness consists in title and parade, he is fully convinced that a first order is as necessary to good government, as two lines are required to make a parallel: but, in acknowledging the necessity, he is very far from vindicating the absurdity of grandeur. To the in-

dividuals, either directly named, or only alluded to in the work, he does not offer an apology; the public, scarcely ever wrong in their opinion of public characters, will not condemn its principles. They will readily see that private pique has only acted as a stimulus to expose public abuses; and that in the discrimination of censure he has not attempted to be partially severe where the object was not generally ridiculous. With regard to the construction of the poem and its explanatory notes, the author honestly confesses, that, as the characters are of a restless and inconsistent nature, he has transiently viewed the groupe,

And caught the follies living as they rose.

POPE.

NOTES.

# N O T E S.

---

NOTE to page 13.

THE following curious passage has appeared in an extract from a pamphlet lately published, intitled, A Dissertation on Government. Speaking of the equality of man, a term, by the bye, incompatible with that of practical government, the author observes, " It is " the natural equality of man, which, giving birth to " justice, enables the human species to unite, to form " commonwealths, to reciprocate happiness,

" All men then are equal: this every government " must suppose—but none can allow till after the decease " or before the birth of individuals—or none could stand, " for none could stand without justice, which has for " its basis equality. But men cannot be equal in some " respects, and not equal in others; therefore, they are " equal in all respects."

If equality produce justice, and no government or society can subsist for a moment without it, whence comes it, that, wherever this strange mixture of justice and

equality is *supposed* to exist, there is nothing but plunder and depredation? Viewing the question, as every politician should, in the most extended sense of the term, I cannot for a moment see justice in any one government or society, whatever may be its basis, which holds it lawful to trespass upon the rights of others. The argument before us takes in the whole human species—*all men are equal*—consequently all men should be just. But if one government or society feel a right to encroach upon another, the least powerful must become unequal to the stronger, and the stronger be unjust; yet this principle exists in every part of the habitable globe.

When men, for the sake of argument only, or to acquire notice by novelty of idea, go diametrically opposite to experience, it is natural to conclude that they either wish to mislead by innovation, or to surprise by ingenuity. Fortunately, however, for this country, there is too much good sense among the people to be hurried away by the former, and the error is too palpable to succeed in the latter.

The same author remarks,

“ In all our disquisitions it is extremely absurd to  
 “ consider things in any other manner than as they are  
 “ subservient to practice.”

I offer

I offer this observation as a corroborative to my own. It may likewise serve as an apology for the liberty I have taken with a favourite syllogism.

NOTE to page 33.

One night's attendance in the gallery of the House of Commons will afford a clear illustration of this remark. A very recent reply from a celebrated gentleman of probationary memory, to an excellent speech on the reform of the royal burghs in Scotland (which, I hope, was only intended as a gradual approach to the rotten boroughs in England), must convince the people, that, while *their* interests alone are supposed to be canvassed, personal pique and old resentments give birth to the most intemperate expressions. If a member of the House can be convicted before his peers of uttering *inflammatory* and *wicked* language, it is incumbent upon that House to arraign him; but it is a direct libel of the most serious tendency; a libel which goes to annihilate the confidence of his constituents, and to draw down the just displeasure of his sovereign, for one member to be personally attacked, and pointedly charged with little less than treason by an opposite member.

NOTE to page 19.

This observation puts me in mind of a paragraph



which appeared some little time back in one of the daily papers. I hope, for the sake of justice and humanity, the whole has been misrepresented. In delivering his charge to the jury, after a request had been made by an author under prosecution for libellous publications, that the rule might be enlarged to enable him to prepare for his defence, *some person* in court observed, *there could not be any objection to their granting it, for that probably by that time the author in question would plead insanity.*—Fugit irrevocabile verbum, et litera scripta manet.

If this language came from the bench, it was, according to the opinion of an ingenious and celebrated foreigner, who has written most ably on the constitution of England, a gross violation of the law, and the most cruel advantage, since the days of Jefferies, that was ever taken over the controuled situation of the man and subject. It was a direct insinuation that the mind of a supposed culprit—*nam adhuc sub judice lis est*—was already deranged, or rapidly becoming so; and of consequence it was a libel upon the most sacred privilege a private citizen possesses, the sound enjoyment of his mental faculties. With regard to the law of libels, as it now stands, its extent is so indefinite, and its nature so little understood, that an Englishman may be prosecuted for  
looking

looking at a man in office. Construction paves the way for misinterpretation, and calumny is affixed to private character, from an expressed abhorrence of public misdemeanour.

Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law.

GOLDSMITH.

NOTE to page 22.

No law should remain in force with the full extent, of which the meanest capacity is not perfectly acquainted. The inquisitions of Spain and Portugal have long been reprobated as the worst tribunals that ever bigotry devised or tyranny supported: but a man must have been ignorant indeed, who could plead a want of knowledge of their restrictions in a country where every circumstance, spiritual and temporal, perpetually reminded him from his cradle; and a stranger had no business to interfere in matters of belief. Englishmen may have their rights, but they are as little known as their wrongs, in detail.

NOTE to page 37.

The philosopher Diogenes felt himself equal, indeed much superior, within the narrow confines of his tub, to the most powerful monarch that ever ruled mankind; yet none will attempt to set *him* up as a model for imitation, although the native rights of man were more conspicuously maintained by his eccentric and unsocial character,

character, than by all the united theoretical contradictions of modern philosophy. He, as well as the fool of Ephesus, would most probably have exclaimed in the days of Augustus,

Tentanda via est quâ  
Me quoque possem tollere ab humo.

NOTE to page 29.

The follies of an ancient nobleman, his extravagance and imbecillity, may be borne, because the recollection of what his forefathers did for community, softens asperity with gratitude, and throws some light upon the shade of their descendants: but there is no excuse, no palliative to be found for the pride and inconsistency of new-created dulness.

NOTE to page 34.

What opinion must the generality of mankind form of the representative part of our constitution, when they hear that the industrious and honest yeoman, who rents from two to three hundred pounds annually, has no more right to elect a member than the wandering Arab or the Persian? I do not exaggerate when I assert that on a ring-fence estate of near eight thousand pounds yearly value, in the west of England, there are not four farmers entitled to vote; whilst in another county every  
strolling

strolling mountebank that chooses to hang up his kettle, may be the most important casting voice in a general election. But all this is accounted for. A very little time back a gentleman, whose daughter is well known for the prodigious wealth she possesses, became a warm advocate for reform in parliament. Will not the public be surprised to learn, that, at the very time he stood pledged to bring on the question, he actually monopolized the representation of three places? This is one instance, out of many I could produce, of the wholesale traffic in elections: of the retail little more need be said than that, upon an average, there are not above three, or four at the most, free and uninfluenced voters in any one election for town or county. The cause is palpable—Every country attorney is in the secret; and every rich Jew or Indian is made acquainted with the certain avenues that lead to the British senate, without the toil of knowledge or the drudgery of virtue. The most limited understanding can easily see that, however plausible the attempt at a reform may appear, it will never be effectually accomplished till the nation at large become tired with discussion, and undertake the task themselves. If this should be the alternative, the voice of arrogance and self-sufficiency will be heard as little then, as the murmurs of the people are regarded now. Without

the vivacity of the Gaul, the Briton is more determined. He thinks before he acts; but when he does act, he is not easily diverted.

NOTE to page 113.

When administration is made acquainted, as by this time it unquestionably must be, with the several associations which are formed among the peasantry, to resist the galling trespasses of the clergy, in tithes, &c. the many circumstances that create dissatisfaction cannot be forgotten. Amongst a variety of the most oppressive, I shall take the liberty to specify one, much in point, and existing to the full. Two adjoining parishes, the whole duty of which is performed by one clergyman for the annual allowance of sixty pounds, pay to the cathedral church eight hundred odd sterling. The other parishes, I presume, contribute in proportion. It is natural to ask why so large a collection should be made from the indigent and industrious, to support a few individuals, who let out the several parishes to the cheapest bidder? Or why, since men of knowledge and spiritual information can be found at so low a rate, the parishes should be cramped, and not at liberty to choose a pastor for themselves?

NOTE



## NOTE to page 48.

It would give me real pain to hear it asserted, upon just grounds, that this passage is the dictate of malevolent reflection. To personal invective I have already declared an unfeigned aversion; nor can I forbear remarking, that whether the author of a book, intitled, *The Life of Thomas Paine*, be really a Mr. Oldys, or some covert person in the pay of ministry, he will obtain little credit with the fair and candid part of mankind for attempting to ridicule the writer, without first confuting what he has written. It is of little consequence to the public who Mr. Paine's father and mother may have been, or how he struggled through want and disappointment into notice. A cool and dispassionate survey of his political principles cannot take in accident of birth nor situation; and whether the indicative mood have been used instead of the subjunctive, or an adverb in the room of a preposition, it matters little, provided the argument be sound. The *Rights of Man* have been professedly written for the most ignorant and the least refined; language was not necessary where the plainest terms could scarcely be understood; and I much question whether the honourable Mr. Burke would not find it as difficult to write like Thomas Paine, as the latter might prove it impossible to imitate the former. Not  
but

but that an opening has been given by the author himself for much personal abuse. He has in several passages been guilty of the grossest egotism, and in instances totally irrelevant of the question; but not sufficiently so, to justify the ungenerous disclosure of every private and domestic foible. With regard to myself, I honestly confess that, whatever irony may be supposed to exist in the passage alluded to in this preface, my only wish has been to shew the absurdity of attempting to establish systems and regulations diametrically opposite to human practice.

For tides and tempests to provide a plan,  
And bind up nature in the Rights of Man.

If I have not given Mr. Paine credit for all the perfections of the mind and heart necessary to preserve the doctrine he has preached, it is because I do not think him more than man; and if he be conscious of the weaknesses attached to mortality, why endeavour to make them greater, by breaking down all the restraints and boundaries of passion? It would be less inconsistent with reason to believe in the golden age of poetry, than to suppose it possible for any country to be governed on the principles of the Rights of Man.

NOTE to page 44.

It is singular to observe that the present times are not  
only

only governed by parties, but that each party should have a species of triumvirate. In administration three rule the realm; in opposition three take the lead; and, as the literary system is somewhat connected with the political, we easily perceive a triumvirate in each department. Three sit in judgment at Old Drury, three reign in the Green Room at Covent Garden; with this difference, that the triumvirate of the first is more conspicuous, from its approximation to royalty.

*Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est.*

It should not be forgotten, that in every one of these triumvirates there is a Lepidus; that is to say, in plain English, an easy accommodating creature.

NOTE to page 32.

I much question whether the pilot that landed Cæsar in his crazy boat, after a most violent tempest in the Adriatic, was half so well rewarded as a modern captain would be for the safe transportation of a young prince through the pleasant vicissitudes of air and prospect in the Mediterranean. Vide the sum paid to Captain Keate, for conveying Prince Edward to Gibraltar.

NOTE to page 30.

I see but one excuse for the introduction of a weak  
man

man into the peerage of the country; and that nation must be corrupt indeed which requires the expedient; I mean in the case of overgrown wealth. By sinking the rich commoner into the ostentatious nobleman, a considerable expence is entailed upon the title, and the individual is less provided with the means to answer the views of faction. Here, in fact, nobility becomes a kind of opiate that stupefies the dullest, and lulls into an apathy to public concerns the most vain and inconsistent.

NOTE to p. 32.

The following extract out of Baker's Chronicle, a book to which I am much indebted for information respecting the origin of some high-plumed noblemen of the present hour, may afford a contrast not highly to the advantage of modern \*\*\*\*\*y. Speaking of Edward the Sixth, he concludes with this passage :

“ In no king's reign were ever more parliaments for the time, nor fewer subsidies: the greatest was in his last year, when yet there was but one subsidy, with two fifteens and tenths, granted by the temporality, and a subsidy by this clergy. And indeed to shew how loth the king was to lay impositions upon his people, this may be a sufficient argument: that though he were much in debt, yet he chose rather to deal with the

Foulket

Foulket in the Low Countries for money upon loan, at the interest of fourteen pounds for a hundred for a year. But his ways for raising of money were by selling of chantry lands and houses, given him by parliament; and by enquiring after all church-goods, either remaining in cathedral and parish-churches, or embezzled away, as jewels, gold and silver chalices, ready money, copes, and other vestments; reserving to every church one chalice, and one covering for the communion-table, the rest to be applied to his benefit. He also raised money by enquiring after offenders of offices in great places; in which enquiry one *Beaumont*, master of the rolls, being convicted of many crimes, surrendered all his offices, lands, and goods, into the king's hands. Also one *Whaley*, receiver of Yorkshire, being a delinquent, surrendered his office, and paid a great fine besides. Also the lord *Paget*\*, chancellor of the duchy, con-

\* This title—which in its present owner is embellished by wealth and royal countenance—seems in its infancy to have been marked by the frown of majesty.

“ About this time Lord Paget was committed to the Tower, for what cause is not certain; and being a knight of the order, his garter was taken from him, by garter king at arms, upon this pretence, that he was said to be no gentleman, either by father or mother.”

K

victed



victed that he had sold the king's lands and timber-woods without commission, and had applied the king's fines to his own use, for these and other offences, surrendered his office, and was fined at four thousand pounds, which he paid in hand."

Although the revenue would be little benefited by the gold and silver of the churches in these days—which are literally less adorned than many stables and dog-kennels—some little relief to public exigency might be gathered from the accumulated wealth of the churchmen. When it is publicly mentioned that eight and ten thousand pounds are annually received by one country-cathedral for the support of seven or eight clergymen, does not justice cry shame upon taxes that grind the industrious, but cannot reach the indolent?

NOTE to page 6.

When the assumed indifference of M—n—y (for I cannot believe it real) shall have been roused into some alarm for the continuance of itself and friends, it may perhaps be surprised to see the phalanx of determined reformation headed by the landed interest of the country. The present activity of the Commons springs from a source of splendid abilities; but what is still more glorious,

rious, there is a quality amongst them—seldom found in the heat of parties—which to public ambition attaches the clearest conduct and the noblest principle; which will not make situation the bartered object of necessity, nor passion the ruling impulse. I do not compliment at the expence of truth, when I congratulate the people in having on their side the names of Lambton, Grey, Whitbread, &c. names as unimpeached in private life, as they are generally respected in public. When, with known integrity, youth and independence undertake the task—correction *must* ensue.

NOTE to page 80.

If what from its first principle must necessarily produce evil cannot be good itself, how can *that* be good reasoning to a nation which is not so to a government, when the effect is the same? However distinct the terms may be in other senses, in the one before us I think they are perfectly alike, nor can a line be drawn. As war cannot be avoided, be the leaders of a country ever so peaceably inclined—and none are more so than ours—resources must be found. The only question is, whether the demands of government be for other purposes than public necessity requires, and whether war

be entered upon from private considerations only,—in this case an unavoidable evil is aggravated by the wanton conduct of a minister; and the nation, if led into his projects by delusive hopes and promises, is made the dupe of his finesse—but the finesse is not therefore good, nor is the reasoning so—it may be *specious* in that particular instance—nor must we suppose with Mr. Paine, that all government is corrupt, and the people necessarily fools.

In two instances of accusation and serious impeachment, England has exhibited to the world the most singular species of public justice for public misdemeanour, that ever marked the record of tradition.—Verres, although frequently quoted for comparison to each delinquent, is outdone by both. The cause of Sir T. R. being highly fed and seasoned to the northern palate, was suddenly carried off by an apoplexy. That which is now the pleaded subject of the hall, and the desultory conversation of the court, is probably verging towards dissolution by a slower process of reconciling treatment, till it is finally to die of a consumption.

